THE FREE-HOLDER

FALL 1998 THE OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDED 1960

- **THE STOOF: A HOT TOPIC**
- **THE WRIGHT SISTERS: WAS THEIRS' THE WRONG MISSION?**
- **MARKING NASSAU'S FIRST HUNDRED YEARS**
- **BITS FROM HOLIDAYS PAST**

Seasons Greetings

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE OF THE TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

Editorial

I would like to take a little time to wish our readers the joy of this holiday season and to make a request. It seems that we are all rushing madly about trying to get everything done in time for our various holiday celebrations. We lose track of what it is we are celebrating. STOP! Enjoy the sights and smells of this special time of year. Lose yourself in the glory of this season rather than in the minutiae of preparation. Look at your loved ones gathered round and be thankful for what God has given you and the rest of mankind.

Happy Holidays!

THE FREEHOLDER
of the
Oyster Bay Historical Society
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Purpose: The Oyster Bay Historical Society was founded in 1960 with the express purpose of preserving the history of the Town of Oyster Bay. The Society maintains a museum and research library in the Town-owned c.1720 Earle-Wightman House, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay. Call (516) 922-5032 for more information.

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ABOUT OUR FRONT COVER

This illustration, entitled "Getting Ready for Christmas" by W.L. Sheppard, dates from around 1882. The general store owner in a small town is displaying the wares he has ordered for the season while an eager audience pauses on their way home from school to look longingly at the array of toys. Will Christmas ever come?!!

THE POST RIDER

To the Editor:

As a follow-up to my article on Fitzmaurice Flying Field in the Summer 1998 *Freeholder,* I visited the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City to gather additional material on Fitzmaurice and to learn more about local airfields on Long Island. The Museum consists of several buildings that were part of Mitchel Field and are now adjacent to Nassau Community College. The old hangars house dozens of early aircraft in various stages of restoration by skillful and dedicated volunteers. There is also a library of books, articles, pamphlets and, perhaps most striking, photos of the many small airfields that dotted Long Island's landscape in the first half of the 20th century, as well as thousands of photos dealing with the history of aviation.

The Cradle of Aviation photo file underscores the critical importance of Long Island to the development of aviation, as well as the remarkable progress made in aviation in a relatively short period. For example, in the local

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THE STOOF: A "DUTCH NEXT DOOR" FEATURE

by Lee Myles

Anyone with more than a passing familiarity with 17th century Dutch art will have noticed that many of the paintings, drawings and engravings showing interiors also show, as an item of furnishing, a small squarish, box-like contrivance that usually contains a redware vessel in which sometimes can be seen the glowing embers of a tiny peat fire. This is a "stoof," an article called in the English of today a "foot stove" or "foot warmer. "

One of the Dutch paintings that everybody knows is Vermeer's wonderful picture of the *Maid Servant Pouring Milk*. On the floor directly behind the woman is a stoof. The side towards the viewer is open. Seen within is a round, cup-handled, redware vessel containing a chunk of glowing peat. Several differences from the 19th century American foot stove are to be noted. The structure of the stoof is entirely of wood unlike most of those to be seen in American museums and private collections. These have a wooden frame and an inner box of pierced tin. Peat, the common Dutch fuel, was replaced by charcoal here. The redware fuel vessel is not to be found in American examples which, perhaps two hundred years ago, gave way to a shallow pan of tin.

Almost any published collection of reproductions of 17th century Dutch art will provide other pictures of the stoof. Unlike the Vermeer example, many of these will be shown in use, giving comfort to a Dutch vrouw sitting in a cold room. These pictures tell us much about how the stoof was used.

How long did the Dutch employ the stoof before some more effective means of providing warmth in cold houses was adopted? Doubtless evidence of the extent of the device's use in the 18th and 19th centuries is available in Holland and perhaps elsewhere but its tenure there is not an issue in this article. Suffice it to report that the American artist, George Wharton Edwards, traveling there in 1909 wrote of a Dutch housewife trading him several attractive household items including "a little walnut foot-stove, one of the finest I have ever seen."

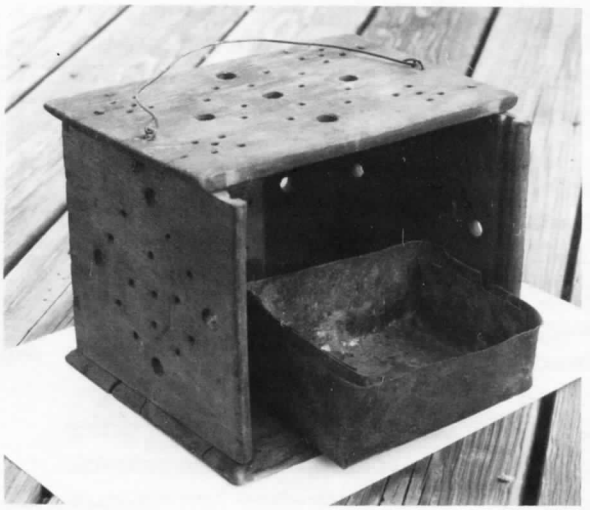
An engraving attributed to Rembrandt, dated 1631

"Women Sewing," an engraving by Geertruid Roghman

Dutch pictures also have something to tell us about the appropriateness of the terms we English speakers have substituted for the Dutch term. Stoof, incidentally, is pronounced like our word loaf. In the 18th century we either used the Dutch term or mispronounced it into stove, a sound that perhaps came easier to our tongues. As we slipped into the nineteenth century however, we altered stove to foot stove and some users dropped stove altogether and said foot warmer. Of course these terms are less than precise because the stoof, while it may warm one or both of the feet, does so incidentally. Note that, perhaps with a few exceptions, the stoof was used by women. Those women, when the cold weather arrived, donned heavy skirts and, not unusually, a multitude of petticoats. That helped, when the wearer was

moving about, to keep her lower half reasonably warm, but it was something else when the wearer was sitting at work or at rest above a cold, cold floor. Then the skirt and petticoats were a conduit that passed the frigid air ever farther up the legs until it reached the constriction at the waist. Well-shod feet do not suffer greatly from the cold unless it is really intense. We may be permitted to doubt that the stoof would ever have been developed if cold feet were the only problem.

If you still incline to believe that the main object of the stoof was to warm the feet, why do so many pictures show only one foot thereon? That foot is, of course, merely tenting the skirts to catch the heat and direct it to the suffering areas above. Early in the nineteenth century a new delicacy began to appear in the use of language. For instance, by 1822 the word rooster, a sexless euphemism, had begun to replace cock, the age-old term for a male chicken. At the same time, pantaloons became nether-garments, or even more ridiculous, inexpressibles. The word legs could not be spoken before a lady; the proper term became limbs. Stockings, the covering for legs, were transformed to hose. Buttocks and even backside were seen as objectionable and became seat. American speakers of English knew all too well what portions of the anatomy the stove was intended to heat. With the shift to euphemism picking up speed it became necessary to disguise the basic purpose of the device by denominating it foot stove. You may say, "Hey, wait a minute. It would be hard to find anything suggestive in either stoof or stove." Right, but consider this. It was in the same general period that another kind of stove, the ancestor of the one to be found in our kitchens, began to receive greatly increased attention. Simultaneously, it was beginning to be necessary to discriminate the two stoves in order to avoid confusion. That discrimination was achieved by adding the innocent but inaccurate "foot" to the name of the personal heater designed to comfort the wearers of skirts. A term like leg warmer would have been regarded as less than polite.



A wooden stoof with tin box, collection of the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society

But we are getting ahead of the story. The footstove appears to have originated in the lands of the Dutch and Flemish. Since much that belonged to the cultures of those people found its way to England it is likely that the footstove migrated there quite early. However, the earliest record in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is found in a 1716 quotation from the poet John Gay. Gay wrote, "the Belgian stove beneath her footstool glows." He may have seen stofen in regular use in England but he seems to have thought of them in terms of their origin.

An entry in Captain Francis Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, 3rd edition, 1796, suggests that the English still regarded the stoof as a Dutch phenomenon at the end of the century:

> SOOTERKIN, A joke upon Dutch women, supposing that by their constant use of stoves, which they place under their petticoats, they breed a kind of small animal in their bodies, called a sooterkin.

The scurrility apart, the definition not only tells us the stoof was still being assigned to the Dutch but its locating of the device "under their petticoats" makes rather clear that Grose did not see it as a warmer for the feet.

Further investigation may tell us whether the English adopted the stoof to any substantial degree. If so we might have reason for thinking that they brought it with them to America. At this point that does not seem likely. Given its importance in the Netherlands in the 17th century it seems more likely that

the Dutch introduced the stoof here either alone or perhaps along with English settlers who had learned about it from the Dutch before coming here. We might wonder if the Pilgrims during their long stay in Holland had recognized the effectiveness of the tiny heater as a comfort provider and included a supply of them in their baggage on the *Mayflower* but a Dutch introduction seems more probable.

The Albany Institute of History owns a stoof marked with the initials MD and the date 1675. It is believed to have belonged to a woman of Dutch origin, Margarita Douw of Albany, and to have originated in the Netherlands.

Another stoof, which was collected by Wallace Nutting, and is thought to be of 18th century New York manufacture is of the all-wood variety, without the internal tin box that developed in this country. Still another evidence of Dutch influence is an 1732 entry in a probate inventory of Col. Wm. Tailer. It reads, "1 Dutch Stove -8-."

Not clearly an evidence of ownership of a footstove is the inventory item, "1 brass stoof pan," of Cornelis van Dyke of Albany who died in 1686. In modern Dutch a stoofpan is a stewpan. Perhaps in 1686, however, the word referred to the container for coals that was inserted in the wooden (later tin) stoof case. When shown in Dutch pictures these containers, so far noted, are always of pottery but it is surely not impossible that the metal substitutes found with later American footwarmers may have begun to be used as early as the latter part of the 17th century.

The biggest part of what little evidence there is seems to indicate that the Dutch share in the Americanization of the stoof was not insignificant. Let's look at American foot stoves after 1700.

A newspaper advertisement in November 1750 by a New York City theater suggests a rather exotic utilization of the stoof:

> This Evening will be presented a Comedy called A Bold Stroke for a Wife. The House being new floor'd, is made warm and comfortable; besides which Gentlemen and Ladies may cause their stoves to be brought.

In 1789 on Eliot St. in Boston John Weare Junior is listed as a stove frame maker. No doubt he worked for the local tinsmiths who made the ventilated tin box with its pan for coals that was the stove proper. Tin smiths had been at work in New England since at least early in the century. When they started to make foot stoves is problematical.

In 1775 Dr. Robert Honyman, a Scotch physician living in Virginia, set out to visit the British colonies in the north. He arrived in the City of New York on March 10th, a cold, windy day. Honyman left us an account of his trip. On the 12th he went to church at Saint Paul's, one of the two English churches in the city. After the service he walked over to Trinity Church, "hard by." He learned about an interesting custom during his church visits. "There is one peculiarity here which one will not see in the southern Provinces. Before the ladies come into church, their servants come in with little wooden Stoves, & place them in the pews for their mistresses to put their feet upon them." In a city originally Dutch, the English ladies had adopted the Dutch stoof for warding off the chill when attending church in the cold months.

J.D. Goodwin's *History of East Hartford* tells us that, prior to 1818 when a box stove was installed in the church, footstoves were used and a hundred or more might be operating on a Sunday. The effect was to render the air "smoky and blue to a choking degree." Goodwin goes on to say that after the morning sermon people flocked to neighboring houses to thaw out till time for the afternoon service. "Then they

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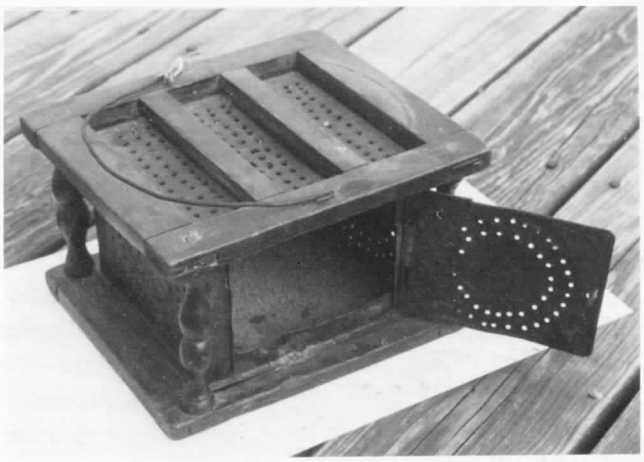

American "foot" stove, tin and wood, collection of the Oyster Bay Historical Society

THE WRIGHT SISTERS: 17TH CENTURY QUAKER ACTIVISTS

by Mildred Murphy DeRiggi, Ph.D

The following article was originally published in Long Island Women: Activists and Innovators, edited by Dr. Natalie A. Naylor, and appears here courtesy of the editor. Our readers may wish to acquire a copy of this publication, which also includes articles on two other Town of Oyster Bay residents, Abigail Leonard of Farmingdale and Barbara McClintock at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Laurel Hollow. Please call the Long Island Studies Institute at 463-6411 for more information.

The editor of The Freeholder would like to thank Dr. Naylor and Dr. DeRiggi for their interest in this magazine as well as their helpful comments.

In mid-17th century England, a charismatic movement emerged inspired by a central belief that God had provided each man or woman with an "Inner Light" to direct him or her in the way of truth. The members of this movement called themselves Children of the Light or simply Friends. They were soon known to the world as Quakers, a reference to the trembling that Friends sometimes displayed as an emotional response during prayer.

Quakers recognized women and men as spiritual equals and encouraged women to give public witness to their faith. By so doing, Quakers broke with the Christian tradition advocated by the apostle Paul. He had admonished his followers in these words: "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. " (1 Timothy 2:11-12) Quakers were the one Christian group who offered women a worship that was without rituals performed by a ministry of men.

The first Quaker missionaries arrived on Long Island from England in 1657, when the movement was hardly a decade old and filled with millennial hopes and missionary zeal. Half of the Quakers who came to Long Island as missionaries in the 17th century were women. They found on Long Island men and women who were receptive to their message.

The home of Job Wright, brother of the Wright sisters, built c. 1667, torn down 1948.

This article considers the example of three sisters from the Town of Oyster Bay, Mary, Hannah and Lydia Wright, who found empowerment in their role as Quaker witnesses to demand an end to religious persecution. Each sister in turn demonstrated a willingness to risk danger and endure slander by publicly protesting the policy of persecution by the Massachusetts authorities against the Quakers. Assertively and independently, each questioned the authority of ministers and magistrates, taking a course of action not considered appropriate for women in a paternalistic society. I will address both their public actions defying the political leadership in Massachusetts and what is known of their private lives in Oyster Bay.

The Wright Family were among the first settlers of Oyster Bay. Peter, father of the sisters, had arrived on the initial voyage of settlement in 1653 with Captain Samuel Mayo from Cape Cod and the Reverend William Leverich. Peter and his family were joined by his two brothers, Nicholas with his family, and Anthony. The Wrights had originally settled in Salem, Massachusetts and later moved to Sandwich on Cape Cod before making Long Island their home.

The inhabitants of both Salem and Sandwich were known to include many individuals who dissented from the religious views of the more orthodox Massachusetts settlers. When members of the Wright Family became convinced Quakers is uncertain, but soon they were among the most ardent Friends on Long Island. Anthony, the bachelor uncle of the sisters, held Quaker meetings in his home. Later, part of his homestead

became the Quaker burial ground and the site of the meeting house.[1]

Mary, the eldest of the Wright sisters, was the first to appear in the public records when she traveled to Massachusetts to protest the hanging of Mary Dyer, which had taken place on June 1, 1660. Mary Dyer had been a friend and supporter of Anne Hutchinson, accused of heresy and exiled from Massachusetts in 1637. One of the chief complaints against Mrs. Hutchinson had been that she had endeavored to explain Scripture in a series of meetings at her Boston home, thus attempting to usurp the role of minister. Mary Dyer lived in Rhode Island but she had visited Long Island during the winter before her death and it is probable that the Wrights knew her personally.

It is a reminder of the danger that Mary Wright faced to recall that Mary Dyer herself had been executed because she returned to Massachusetts, after being expelled, to protest the hanging of two other Quaker men. As a result of her protest, Mary Wright was thrown into prison along with several Quakers from Salem, Massachusetts who had accompanied her.

Fortunately for Mary and other Friends, Charles II, restored to the throne of England in 1660, had demanded an end to executions of Quakers in Boston.[2] The new law in Massachusetts provided that any person convicted of being a Quaker would be stripped naked to the waist and tied to the back of a cart. The person would then be whipped through the town to its border. The process would be repeated until the boundary of the colony was reached.[3]

Mary Wright was about 18 years old when she demonstrated at Boston and endured her resulting punishment. A few years later, her younger sister Hannah made the trek from Long Island to Massachusetts. Hannah was only about 13 years of age when she appeared before the Boston Court and demanded an end to the persecution of Quakers. The magistrates were startled to be challenged by someone who was only a child. According to a witness, they were silent at first until an official exclaimed: "What shall we be baffled by such a one as this? Come. Let us drink a Dram."[4]

Hannah's youth may have saved her from the consequences that could have resulted from her boldness. A merchant, John Richbell, brought her back to Oyster Bay where she lived with her mother. Hannah, who never married, assumed a role as a public Friend, preaching and visiting meetings. While on a mission to Maryland in 1675, Hannah drowned when her boat capsized.[5]

1. The will of Anthony Wright (Aug. 15, 1672), granting the land to the Quakers, is copied in the *Oyster Bay Town Records* 1: 687.

2. English Friends had presented accounts of the persecution of Quakers in New England. In 1661, the English government ordered that Quakers condemned to death be released or sent to England.

3. William Sewel, *History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers* (1722, Philadelphia: Friends' Book Store, 1856), 1: 281.

4. Sewel. *History of the Rise, Increase & Progress of the Quakers,* I: 281.

5. Matthew Prior, a neighbor, recorded his account of the accident in the *Minutes of the Friends Meeting at Oyster Bay, Matinecock and Flushing* (Haviland Records room, NYC).

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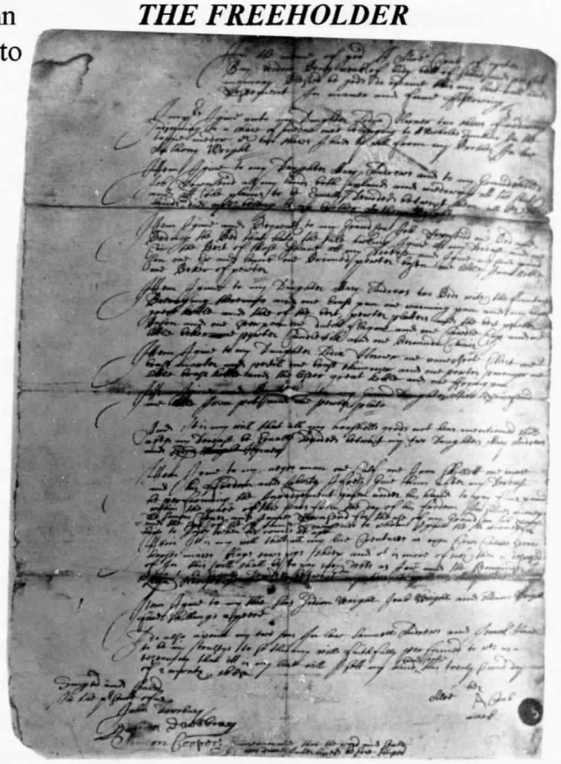
THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE FREEHOLDER



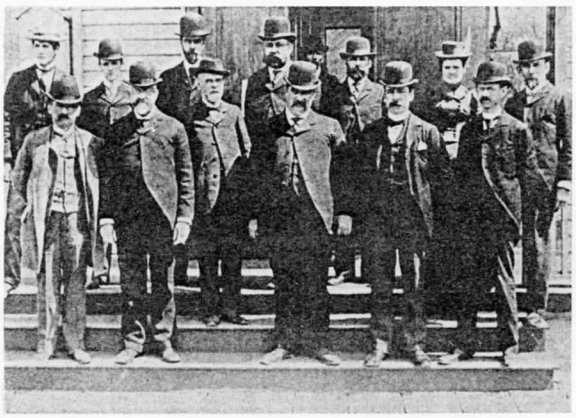
The will of Alice (Wright) Crabb, mother of the Wright sisters. The sisters are mentioned prominently in the document.

1899 NASSAU COUNTY: ON THE VERGE OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY

by Edward Magnani

Times were changing rapidly at the end of the 19th century. With its defeat of Spain in 1898, the United States was evolving from a continental into a world power. In New York State, the shift from an agricultural to a manufacturing economy was accelerating, fueled by the influx of cheap immigrant labor. On January 1, 1898 New York City, which held most of the immigrant poor, was consolidated into five boroughs; Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the western portion of Queens. The eastern portion of Queens County including the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay, fought incorporation and became a new county named Nassau on January 1, 1899. Although disputes over the location of the Queens County Courthouse (Long Island City in the west or Mineola in the center) acted as the catalyst for the separation from Queens, other more basic differences were at work. These included; Rural versus Industrial Life, Republican versus Democratic Parties, Wealthy-Middle Class versus Middle Class-Poor. Ironically, Nassau County, which was founded to maintain the status quo of the nineteenth century, eventually became the prototype for sprawling suburban life which replaced city living for most Americans in the second half of the twentieth century.

Plans for the new county were finalized in 1898, the year that President McKinley declared war on Spain. Camp Black on the Hempstead Plains was used to mobilize and train local regiments before departure to Cuba. Former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt of Oyster Bay became a national figure by leading the Rough Riders' heroic charge in the battle for San Juan, Cuba. The Spanish-American War lasted only four months and America lost a total of 460 in battle (and many more due to disease). A few, but well placed, Americans had favored war with Spain to extend American influence by obtaining naval bases in the Caribbean and the Far East. This policy was deemed necessary for continental protection and expansion of trade. However, Spanish cruelty toward the Cubans had genuinely aroused American public opinion. Without this avalanche of sympathy for Cuba Libre ("Free Cuba"), war with Spain would have been unlikely. But the war had also precipitated Dewey's stunning naval victory in Manila that had secured the Philippine capital for the United States.



Nassau County officers, 1899. Oyster Bay supervisor William H. Jones is at extreme left, front row. Courtesy Edward J. Smits, Nassau County Historian

In the months following the Spanish-American War, many people suggested that America should assume a role as a world power. In Congress, legislators called for the annexation of all Spanish territories. Expansionists such as Theodore Roosevelt, former President Harrison, and Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan argued for creating an American empire Others, including Grover Cleveland, Andrew Carnegie, and Mark Twain, opposed these ideas. Some in Nassau County were more intimately involved with the war as indicated by the following article in the *Hempstead Inquirer* :

> *Private William Kimpton of the Sixth Regular Infantry is on a furlough visiting his parents here. Mr. Kimpton was once stationed in Honolulu. He is now going to Manila with his regiment, and after his arrival there will be transferred to the Twenty-third Infantry. (Hempstead Inquirer, January 6, 1899)*

The Spanish assumed that the United States would annex Cuba. They hoped that the United States would take over Cuba's $400 million debt. The Americans declined. After all, the war had been fought in support of Cuban

independence. However, on February 6, 1899 we were happy to annex Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. The American army already controlled the city of Manila and was ordered by President McKinley to bring all the islands under military control. The people of the Philippines, he decided, were too "uncivilized" to govern themselves. The Filipinos were shocked. For two years they'd been fighting for their independence from Spain. Since the United States had supported rebels in Cuba and Hawaii, they expected support for their independence as well.

Commodore Dewey wrote to his superiors and pointed out that the Filipinos seemed better prepared for self-government than the Cubans did. The War Department responded by sending more men and equipment to Manila. Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of the Filipino independence movement, felt betrayed. Aguinaldo led his bitter troops into the jungles, and for three years they fought against the military government. In the end the overwhelming power of the American forces defeated them. Despite a plan to prepare the Philippines for independence, America continued to rule the islands until after World War II. The war in the Philippines claimed four times as many American lives as did the war with Spain. Few Americans, however, rejoiced at the victory. As with the Vietnam conflict many years later, there were no heroes. No parades greeted the returning troops. For many, the Philippine war seemed to contradict some basic American values. If the following editorial in the *Hempstead Inquirer* is an indicator, the people of Nassau in 1899 were still, however, basking in the victories of 1898.

> *One year ago Monday, the soldier boys began arriving at Camp Black, a camp of instruction then just located on Hempstead Plains ... And yet in this space of time, covering only a few short months, the geography of the world has been changed and the young republic of the Western World, champion of the down trodden and oppressed, has struck a mighty blow for freedom... No war in the history of nations has been so opulent in its results or has so greatly advanced the cause of humanity.*
>
> *No wonder to-day the broad Hempstead Plains are bedecked with a profusion of wild violets, and the air is fragrant with their sweet (smell). Out of every ill some good shall come ...*
>
> *(Hempstead lnquirer, May 5, 1899)*

With his reputation established as the daring leader in the battle for San Juan, Roosevelt returned to New York in the summer of 1898 and ran for governor. The Oyster Bay resident ran far ahead of the rest of the Republican ticket that fall, though he won by fewer than 20,000 votes, and was elected governor of New York. Even the fiercely Democratic *New York World* conceded that "the controlling purpose and general course of his administration have been high and good." He imbued many officials with a sense of public trust, and instilled in others the fear of dismissal. Roosevelt antagonized corporations and the Republican political machine headed by Sen. Thomas Collier Platt by driving through a tax on corporate franchises, and he supported pro-labor measures even as he called out the National Guard to suppress a strike. He also upgraded teachers' salaries, spurred passage of a bill to outlaw racial discrimination in public schools, and made a stab at arresting the blight of the slums. Finally, he took important steps to preserve the wildlife, forests, and natural beauty of his state. But even the irrepressible Roosevelt needed some time to relax as noted by the *Oyster Bay Guardian* on June 16, 1899 :

> *Governor Roosevelt with his family arrived at Sagamore Hill on Saturday last where he will remain in absolute quiet for a brief vacation from politicians and as far as possible from newspaper-men....*

The business community's resentment of Roosevelt's tax, regulatory, and other programs eventually prompted "Boss" Platt to try to ease him out of the state. Platt encouraged Roosevelt to seek the office of vice president on the ticket with President McKinley in 1900. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R-Mass.), convinced him to take the vice presidency as a possible stepping-stone to the presidency. Roosevelt was popular throughout the nation and he was nominated easily.

CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF ***THE FREEHOLDER***

ASK UNCLE PELEG

Dear Uncle Peleg:

In Charles Dickens' *American Notes* he lists some of the mixed drinks that were passing across the bars of American taverns in 1842. His list included "Gin-sling, Cock-tail, Sangaree, Mint Julep, Sherry Cobbler, Timber-Doodle." Most of these are known today; even Sangaree turns out to be the cooler we and the Spanish call Sangria. But what is a Timber Doodle? I tried several dictionaries to no avail.

Martin Slocum

I can't give you a recipe although I found references to a mixed drink of that name over the last half of the 19th century so I don't think Boz made it up. What I can tell you is that the common usage of timber-doodle is as the name of the American woodcock. Perhaps the bartenders of the 19th century decorated the drink with a woodcock feather as has been suggested was the case with the cocktail, a drink supposedly decorated with the tail feather of a male chicken.

Dear Uncle Peleg:

I made a bet with a friend that you only printed those letters to which you could give answers. He said, "How are you going to prove it?" I said I would send you a letter with some tough questions. If you skipped any or all of them, we'd have a pretty good idea.

What is a Dutch auction?
What is green cheese, the material the moon is said to be made of?
What is a tool called an "alderman?"
What are Chevaux de Fris?

Signed , Anonymous

What made you change your mind about the tough questions?

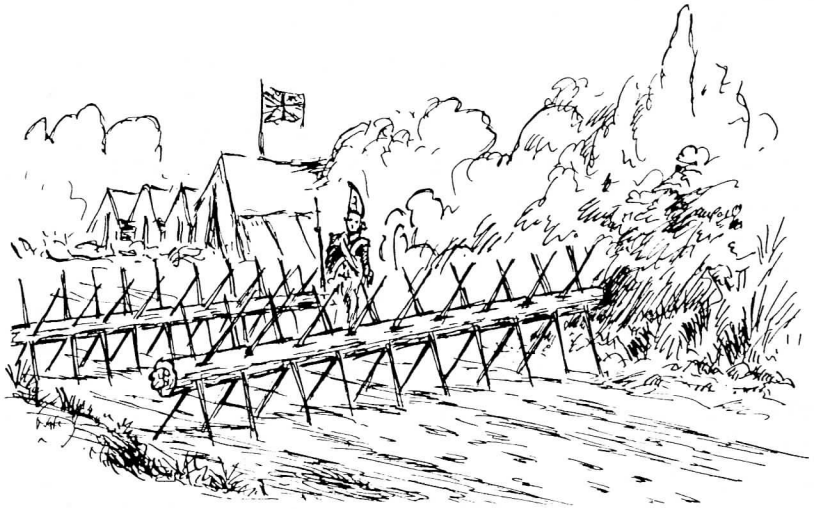
Dutch auction. *One where the auctioneer starts offering the goods with a very high figure and comes down by jumps. The first bidder to signal gets the goods.*

Green Cheese. *Cheese which is immature, unaged, unripened.*

Alderman. *A burglar's crowbar.*

Chevaux de Fris *Literally "Horses of Friesland," a barrier against cavalry consisting of a horizontal, wooden core with long spikes piercing it at intervals x-fashion.*

Your words are interesting but stumping Uncle Peleg is not the point of this feature. Challenges are not invited. Wesolych Swiat!



CURRENTS OF THE BAY

This section focuses on the doings of local historical societies, museums, and communities in the Town of Oyster Bay and its neighbors. Upcoming special events, exhibits, lectures, and tours are featured, so send your submissions to the Editor if you would like to see your events covered by ***The Freeholder.***

P. James Roosevelt

FORMER O.B. HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRUSTEE P. JAMES ROOSEVELT DIES AT AGE 70

P. James Roosevelt, a former trustee and early treasurer of the Oyster Bay Historical Society, died at his home in Oyster Bay on Friday, November 27th, 1998 at the age of 70. For many years, Mr. Roosevelt and his wife, Philippa, lived in what is historically known as the Youngs' Homestead at 1 Cove Neck Road before moving recently to the village of Oyster Bay.

A graduate of St. Mark's School in Massachusetts, and Harvard University, class of 1950, Jim Roosevelt ran an investment business on Audrey Avenue in Oyster Bay for nearly 30 years. He was also active in such local institutions as the Theodore Roosevelt Association, Youngs Memorial Cemetery (where the late President is buried), Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club, the Oyster Bay Sailing Association and Christ Episcopal Church. It was at Christ Church that a Memorial Service was held for Mr. Roosevelt on Saturday, December 5th.

The Oyster Bay Historical Society extends its sympathy to the Roosevelt family, with special thanks for Jim's efforts during our formative years.

T.R.A.'S GABLE ADDRESSES JOINT SOCIETY MEETING

The First Presbyterian Church in Oyster Bay was the site of a lecture by John A. Gable, Executive Director of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 6th. This church, and Christ Episcopal Church across the street, figured prominently in the history of the Roosevelt Family in Oyster Bay, although, as Dr. Gable was quick to point out, T.R. himself remained a member of the Dutch Reformed denomination throughout his life. He and his family did, however, worship at Christ Church whenever they were in residence at Sagamore Hill, and the former President was buried from that parish as well.

The previous day, Dec. 5th, Dr. Gable was among those parishioners who participated in the Memorial Service at Christ Church for P. James Roosevelt, a descendent of the late President who died on Nov. 27th.

In a lecture sponsored jointly by the Oyster Bay Historical Society and the Nassau County Historical Society, Dr. Gable examined the current efforts in Washington to secure the Medal of Honor for Theodore Roosevelt, based on his leadership and

bravery during the Battle of San Juan Hill in Cuba. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the brief war in Cuba between the United States and Spain, which resulted in the end of Spanish influence in both the nearby island nation and the Philippines.

According to Dr. Gable, T.R.'s candidacy for the medal at the close of the war was hindered by the Colonel's desire to get his malaria-stricken troops out of Cuba as quickly as possible. Roosevelt went public with his request for evacuation, rather than proceeding "through channels" with the McKinley administration. This, in turn, diminished his stature in the eyes of the regular army and he was passed over for the coveted award-- although his superiors recommended him for the honor and other participants in the Cuban campaign did receive the Medal of Honor almost immediately.

In spite of this setback, according to Dr. Gable, T.R. emerged as a legitimate war hero whose political career soared until he was steered into the Vice Presidency under McKinley -- a post that was considered purely ceremonial at the time. The rest is history, although Dr. Gable added that his most recent research reveals that Roosevelt, as Vice President, had already begun to explore the possibility of making a presidential bid in 1904!

AMITYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

During the month of October, the Amityville Historical Society's Lauder Museum was the site of an art exhibit featuring the paintings of Cecil Ruggles. Mrs. Ruggles was a lifelong resident of Amityville and a charter member of this organization. She was also editor/ author of the Society's first published volume, "A Backward Glance."

In other news, the Society's 28th Annual meeting took place on Wednesday, Oct. 28h and the Holiday Open House occurred on Sunday, December 13th.

CENTRAL PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Back in late October, the Society was pleased to have as a guest lecturer, Ernest Finamore, a charter member of the Society with strong roots in Bethpage and a retired Grumman employee. Ernie uses his Grumman background for his labor of love with the Grumman Restoration Team, founded in 1973. Two projects currently undergoing restoration are a F4F Wildcat and a F8F Bearcat. The latter is being refurbished for the Thailand Air Classics Association, and the plane was flown by the Prince of Thailand's father in the Thai Air Force in the 1950's.

While we're on the subject of Theodore Roosevelt and the Medal of Honor, the Oyster Bay Historical Society has a limited number of the Rough Riders centennial poster shown at right by renowned local artist Mort Künstler. Priced at $15, which includes shipping and handling, they're sure to sell out quickly, so don't miss out! Order yours today.

FARMINGDALE-BETHPAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Farmingdale-Bethpage Historical Society's 35th installation dinner took place Oct. 27th where John Staudt, a resident of Huntington, spoke on "Long Island and the American Revolution." We recently provided two exhibits for the Farmingdale Public Library, where our meetings are held. Barbara J. Post will serve a fourth term as president of the Society, and she and other officers were inducted on the 27th by two of our founding members, Fred and Dorothy Dyson, who have been active since 1964. On Nov. 22nd, "Long Island Airports of the Past" was the subject of a lecture by Bob Schmidt, who took his first flight more than sixty years ago in an open cockpit plane. When Bob was a youngster, the map of Long Island was dotted with more than one-hundred air fields of various sizes and quality!

Visit the Oyster Bay Historical Society's website!
http://members.aol.com/OBHistory

HICKSVILLE GREGORY MUSEUM

The museum's longest term loan has now become part of the permanent collection, thanks to the generosity of Benson and Augusta Daines of Hicksville. At the front of the main exhibit room, visitors will find the spectacular collection of quartz crystals known as "Herkimer Diamonds." These items are named for Herkimer, N.Y., which is close to the famous collecting sites of Middleville, St. Johnsville and Fonda. "Herkimers" range is size from microscopic druse to almost foot-long crystals.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE MASSAPEQUAS

As mentioned in earlier press releases, Grace Episcopal Church, from whom the Society leases the property that Old Grace Church stands upon, has undertaken the project of placing a circular driveway spanning the entire front of the historic complex. They are thus taking on the additional task of placing a walkway on the west side of the Old Church to make the complex look uniform. The Society is also having a new sign made, designating the name of the Society which will be visible from east and west. Outdoor electric work is being done as well, to provide outlets for lighting and other maintenance equipment.

As far as events are concerned, it was a busy Autumn with the placing of an historical marker at the site of the Thorn Estate (see related article on p.20 of this issue of ***The Freeholder***) and the Apple Harvest Festival in October and the Antique Fair in November.

The October-November issue of the Society's newsletter had an interesting article on "Massapequa's Historical Cemeteries," as well as information on cemeteries in general.

BAYVILLE VILLAGE MUSEUM

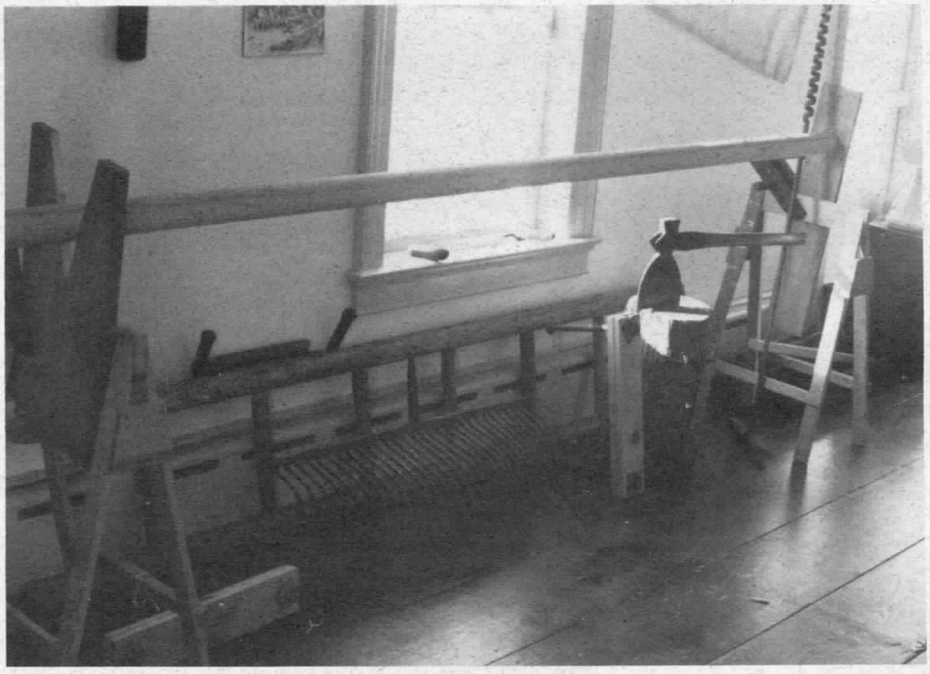
The Bayville Village Museum's new Christmas exhibit will be on view through the end of January. The museum's curators, Gladys Mack and Tom Alfano have done a wonderful job of assembling a collection of old-fashioned children's games and toys for the exhibit, in addition to a fully-decorated tree and a beautifully-restored c. 1890 sled. The museum is open Sunday and Tuesday from 1 to 3 p.m. For appointments call 628-1439. Closed holidays.

OYSTER BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Categories of Membership

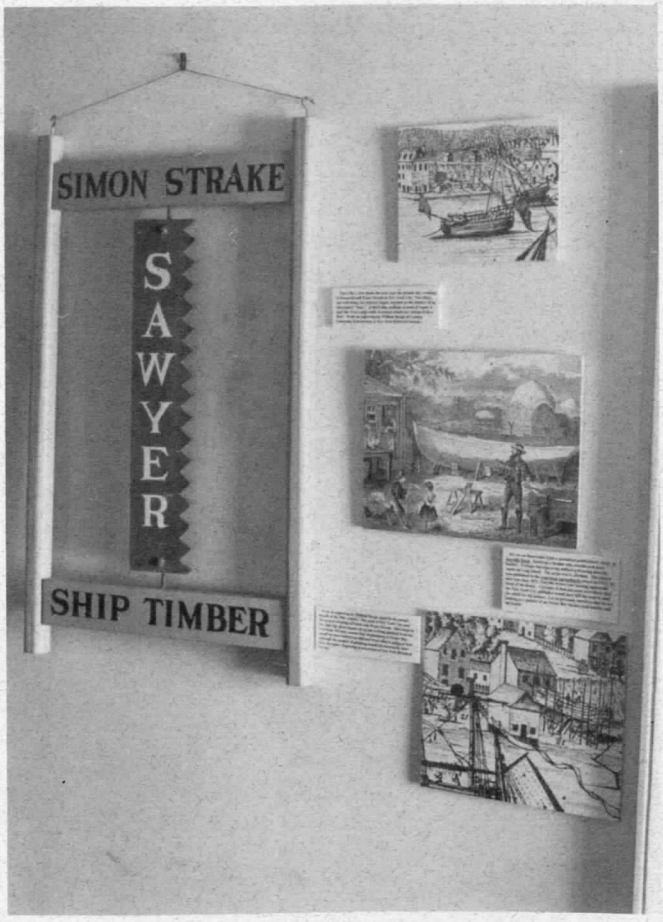
Individual	$ 20	Business	$ 50
Family	$ 30	Business Sponsor	$ 100
Contributing	$ 50	Business Friend	$ 300
Sponsor	$ 100	Business Patron	$ 500+
Sustaining	$ 250	Benefactor	$ 1000+
Patron	$ 500		

Member Benefits: Quarterly Magazine, Members' Party, Invitations to Exhibition Previews and Special Events, 10% Discount on Publications and Workshops. Call 922-5032 for more information on joining the Society.

Many thanks to Harry L. Dickran of Levon Graphics Corp., 210 Route 109, East Farmingdale, for printing ***The Freeholder*** for the Society. His generosity allows the magazine to reach a much wider audience than was heretofore possible. Please patronize our sponsors!



Views of the Oyster Bay Historical Society's recent exhibit on ship-building and related trades at the Earle-Wightman House.



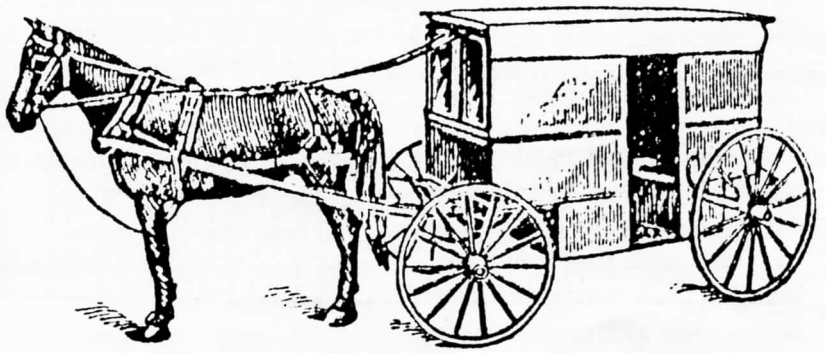
YESTERDAY IN OYSTER BAY

by John Hammond

A century ago, the temperance movement was very strong and local temperance groups took a very active role in trying to close down the purveyors of whiskey. In 1896 a temperance group in Farmingdale became suspicious that Joseph Hippord was selling whiskey when he only had a beer license. The group hired a detective who went undercover, bought a bottle of the suspected liquor for 75 cents and then went directly to the village court with it where the charges were being presented. The bottle was opened

Hatchet-wielding temperance advocate Carry Nation

in the courtroom and to the temperance group's surprise, it contained cold tea. The poor prosecutor reportedly retired from the case in disgust.



Milk wagon, c. 1900

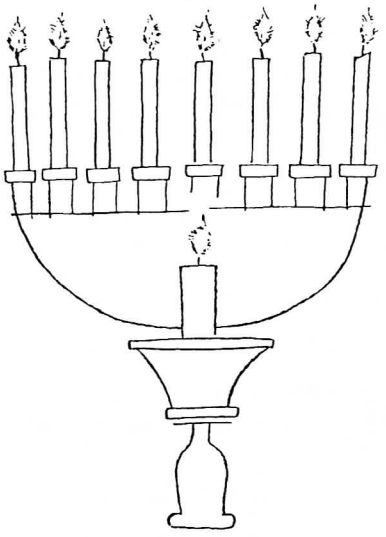
Charles Carl learned a valuable lesson while making his regular daily milk delivery to the Cove Schoolhouse in March 1910. He had pulled his milk wagon up the steep driveway in front of the schoolhouse and neglected to secure the old mare to the hitching post. As he was coming out of the building he noticed the old mare wandering off, straight down the hill, through the trees. The wagon-load of milk caught in the trees and the wagon overturned destroying the rest of the day's deliveries. Carl rushed down the hill just in time to remove the old mare from the traces, sparing her from serious injury.

Football has been played at Oyster Bay for over a century. In a game in November 1899, the team from Oyster Bay School traveled to Locust Valley for a game against Friends Academy. Friends Academy won by the unusual score of 6-5! The following year the two teams played to a tie, neither one scoring. East Norwich had a team as early as 1885; they played Friends College on June 6, 1885.

THE GATHERING PLACE

"The Gathering Place" is the department of the magazine housing contributions of an historical slant but short length that might otherwise be lost among the longer pieces. To our members who are not ready to attempt long or deeply researched articles, this is the place for your notions and comments, however brief.

The Jewish warriors who, under Judah Maccabeus, had defeated the Syrians, did not find that all was well with their town of Modin. Their temple had been defiled, their altar desecrated, and there was much work to do to restore things to their condition of three years before. Crippling their efforts was the fact that there was left in the temple only one small container of illuminating oil good for perhaps a day. The Miracle of the Hanukkah Oil was that it lasted for eight days, the time necessary to complete the restoration of the temple.



From the settlement of the first thirteen colonies until well into the twentieth century there was a very considerable market for wild game of all sorts in this country. Toward the end of that period game had grown relatively expensive but in the earlier days wild fowl was often cheaper than that raised by the farmer. In 1737, for instance, a 40 pound wild turkey hunted in Virginia is said to have sold for the equivalent of 30 cents in today's money. In those days the usual wild turkey was, however a much smaller bird than the Virginia giant or those of the largest size raised for today's market. Recent newspaper reports suggest that wild turkeys are returning to Eastern habitats from which they

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Has the Catalog replaced the Yule Log? We hope not. But we do notice some falling off in the knowledge of Christmas Past. Here, to test your memory of how Christmas used to be, are some questions about holiday traditions.

1. What is lamb's wool, spoken of in connection with the wassail bowl?
2. Were the magi: kings, priests, astrologers, or sages?
3. The American ambassador to Mexico in 1825 introduced to the United States a plant he saw in Mexico during his appointment. What was his name? The plant's name?
4. After landing here in 1620, how did the Pilgrims celebrate Christmas?
5. What is the year of the first artist's representation of a Christmas tree in the U.S.?
6. What is a "Christmas box ?"
7. Is "Hot Cockles": a drink, a game, a shellfish dish, a chicken pot pie?
8. When were electric Christmas tree lights introduced in the United States?
9. What President barred a Christmas tree in the White House on conservationist grounds resulting in his being widely castigated in the press?
10. It is said that the plum Jack Horner pulled out of his Christmas pie was not a fruit but something vastly more valuable. What was it?
11. What was the year of the first known printed Christmas card?
12. Was the introduction of the reindeer as a draft animal for vehicles gliding over snow and ice the inspiration of Clement Moore?
13. "Wesolych Swiat" means what in English and what language are the words in ?
14. Who was the Bishop of Myra?
15. What are "waits ?"

Answers will be found on p. 23

were long ago dispossessed by hunters. Someday if the trend continues, Thanksgiving dinner may strut into your Oyster Bay backyard.

Christmas is coming and the geese are getting fat
Please to put a penny in the old man's hat.
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God Bless you!

On Christmas Day, 1796 Parson James Woodforde, the rector of a parish in Norfolk, England and a famous diarist had guests to Christmas dinner. They were "...Widow Case, Old Thomas Atterton, Christ. Dunnell, Edward Howes, Robert Downing and my Clerk Thos. Thurston." Except for the clerk, they were apparently the parish poor. He gave them "...surloin of beef roasted, plumb pudding and mince pies." Following dinner "... they had some strong beer." Before they left each received a shilling by way of a Christmas present.

Christmas Festivities at Princeton College in 1804

Dr. Samuel Smith was president of Princeton College in 1804. On December 27th of that year he wrote William Paterson, a Princeton graduate who had become a justice of the United States Supreme Court, a letter pertaining to Paterson's grandson who was then attending Princeton. In passing he told Paterson a Christmas story:

> One of our suspended boys of the name of Hart from Kentucky, has been lately making a Christmas frolic among us. The Trustees at their meeting last Spring gave direction to re-admit him into College on certain conditions. Sometime in the Summer he returned to Princeton under the pretense of studying - but it was only pretense. He remained in the town; but haunted the College particularly at nights; & for two or three months past has been endeavoring to mislead some of the more thoughtless & idle boys. It was long before his influence was perceptible in any great degree. But, within a little time past, we began to perceive symptoms of disorder among a few; till, on Christmas eve, always an unlucky time, he induced a number to join him in disturbing the College with a great noise - he fired a pistol three times in the entry, & at length blew up the brick necessary behind it, with gunpowder somehow placed under it, or inserted into the walls.

Hart was pursued by officers with a warrant the next day but escaped into Pennsylvania.

It is gilding the lily to mention it but at that period it was common in some parts of the United States, particularly in the South, to celebrate Christmas with fusillades of small arms fire and gunpowder explosions. Blowing up a privy was not, however, one of the acceptable methods of noisemaking.

Perhaps it is worthy of note that one of the best loved Christmas songs of this century, "White Christmas" was written by a Jew, Irving Berlin. We have traveled a long way on the road to an whole-hearted acceptance of each other for what we are by all the people of the world. We may still have a distance to go but surely Berlin's song is a sign that a large part of the path is behind us.

In a column in the New York Times several years ago, Frank Rich discussed some of the aspects of being Jewish at the period of the year when a more-or-less Christian holiday virtually forced itself on everyone's attention. As a small boy he envied the harvest of presents reaped at Christmas by his Christian friends. He began his column with his mother's telling argument, "Look at it this way. You get presents eight times and they get them only once."

The Post Rider
continued from p. 2

Grumman's Plant 1 and the unpaved airport, with Hicksville at lower right and Bethpage at top, c. 1938.

airfields file, there are pictures of Kitty Hawk, and photos of Glenn Curtiss' 1909 flight, the firs powered flight over Long Island. There are views of the hundreds of planes built and tested on Long Island's airfield, including seaplanes at long-closed bases located at Babylon, Bay Shore, Island Park and Rockaway.

Larger airfields, such as Mitchel and Roosevelt, each with several hundred photos, are documented extensively, but there are many smaller and all-but-forgotten fields, such as Barren Island and Frog's Field, that have only a handful of photos - just enough to stir memories and spark interest. The histories of current fields are well served, with extensive files on Idlewild (Kennedy), North Beach (LaGuardia), Republic and Islip MacArthur. Most fields were either on the Hempstead Plains or in Suffolk County, but Oyster Bay residents can view photos of "their" fields: Central Park, Fitzmaurice and Grumman.

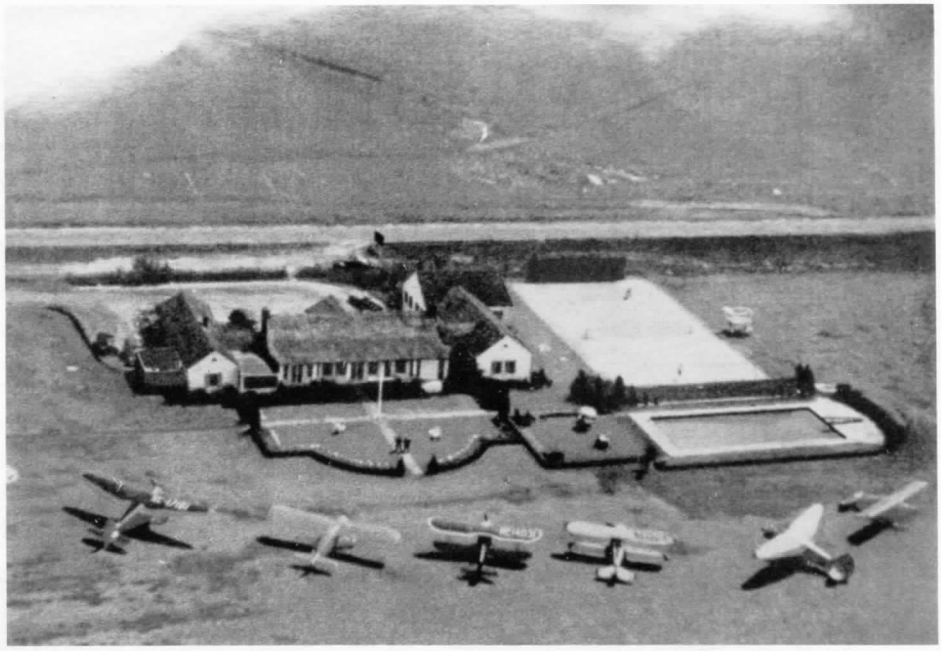
The photo files show the remarkable development of central Long Island from a natural prairie to a modern suburbia. Examples are Curtiss Field, which became the Green Acres Shopping Mall and Fitzmaurice Flying Field, now the center of Massapequa Park. Another noteworthy development can be gleaned from photos contained in the Curtiss Field file showing the first airmail flight in 1911 (all of six miles from Garden City to Mineola!), and the Belmont Park photos of the first inter-city airmail flight (from New York to Philadelphia and Washington in 1919).

This photo of eight aviatrixes was taken at the 1928 Women's Air Derby at Curtiss Field; Amelia Earhart is third from right.

These examples are but a few of the many treasures available in the Cradle of Aviation's photo files, and in its extensive aviation collection. Staff members are working to expand the local airfields collection beyond the current 49 files and several thousand photos (a color photo of the Hicksville Aviation Country Club,

complete with swimming pool and tennis court was recently donated) and would be glad to receive additional items. Anybody who has photos or memorabilia, or who wishes to peruse the collection, may contact the Museum's Assistant Curator, Rebecca Looney at 572-0411. The Museum's e-mail address is mamc@li.net, and its website can be visited at www.htmp.net/nassau/cradle.

George Kirchmann



The Hicksville Aviation Country Club, early 1930s. Courtesy of the Cradle of Aviation Museum.

The Stoof

continued from p. 5

filled their little stoves from the hearth and went back to the meeting house to shiver..." P.T. Barnum tells much the same story in one of his memoirs and adds that the congregation "really merited the title the profane gave them of 'blue skins.'" An account from Greenwich, Connecticut makes clear that church members living near the church stacked their fireplaces with fuel on Saturday night in order to have plenty of coals for the use of their fellow shiverers.

Foot stoves were apparently still in use in Vermont in 1895 "when the people sat all in the cold, fireless except for an occasional foot stove." There is some ambiguity about the date in this account and it may not be so late.

We owe much to the Dutch and the debt is not canceled by the fact that, as in the case of the foot stove, the advance of technology has wiped out the usefulness of some of the benefits they conferred on us. We, who live on Long Island should perform a metaphorical tipping of our hats to the Dutch next door in the matter of the foot stove.

DID YOU KNOW?

- that the first raincoat we know of was invented in Tudor times by one Sir Hugh Platt? He took linseed "oyl" and boiled it, creating a varnish. To color it, he recommended verdigris or vermilion. a cloth sample was dipped until the tint was right. That, according to Sir Hugh, was "not clammy" but of bright color. We're at a loss to tell you how to test for clamminess. When the varnish suited Sir Hugh he dipped his cloth and spread it out to dry leisurely. Tailored into a cloak it served for wear in wet weather.

Woodcut by Alexander Anderson, New York City, early 19th century

THE GRANDEUR OF THE PAST: THE THORN ESTATE

by Arlene Goodenough

In 1707, Major Thomas Jones bought a piece of land from the Marsapegue Indians which he added to his holdings. A mere six years later, those holdings would total 6,000 acres. It was sandy and flat, very near the water's edge on the south shore of Long Island, in what we now call Massapequa.

In 1887, a beautiful home was built on 44 acres of the land. It stretched from present day Merrick Road to present day Sunrise Highway. It was on a beautifully landscaped plot, with a lovely pond to the west and a country road to the east. A line of beech trees was planted along the southern border, facing the Merrick road. The three story frame house had double porches, one built over the other, as the house was intended for summer use.

"Little Unqua," the Thorn home in Massapequa

On October 30, 1889, the house was full of stylish people dressed in their very best, for a young couple was about to be married in the drawing room by none other than the Episcopal Bishop of Long Island, Bishop Littlejohn. A mile down the road stood Grace Episcopal Church, built in 1844, which could hold 100 people, but it was considered too small for the number of guests.

The bride was 22 year old Louise Ackerly Floyd-Jones, and the groom was 27 year old Conde Raguet Thorn. Louise came from the very wealthy Floyd-Jones family. Her brother Edward, had an impressive home just to the west named "Unqua." Louise and Conde named their new home "Little Unqua."

The following August, a son was born to them and they named him Edward Floyd-Jones Thorn. A second son, named Conde Raguet Thorn, Junior, was born in 1898. In 1900, a daughter, Katherine DeLancey Thorn completed the family. Her middle name was chosen in honor of her mother's uncle, DeLancey Floyd-Jones, who was a career officer in the Union Army. He founded the DeLancey Floyd-Jones Free Library in 1896, which is still in operation in Massapequa.

In 1901, tragedy struck the happy family when little Conde, just three years old, died. Later, his parents visited the Cathedral in Seville, Spain. There they were struck by the painting hanging there of an angel leading a child by the hand, done by the Spanish painter Murillo.

They had a stained glass window made, copying the painting, in memory of their son. For the face of the child, a likeness of young Edward was used, as they did not have a picture of Conde. The window was installed in Grace Church, on the east side, nearest the door. It can still be seen today, in the modern church now used by the Grace congregation, on the left side of the altar.

Edward grew up, married Marjorie Peirce and had four children. The first was Louisa Baird Thorn, who later married Paul Bonner. Mrs. Bonner kept strong ties to Massapequa during her long life and was very proud of being a Floyd-Jones. She would get quite indignant if anyone omitted the dash between Floyd and Jones. She was head of the DeLancey Floyd-Jones

Library board until her death, as was her mother before her. Edward's other three children were boys. He named his last son Conde Raguet Thorn II, to honor his dead brother.

Accounts of life in Massapequa in the early years of this century describe the occupants of Little Unqua as a contented family. Mrs. Thorn's nickname was, for some reason, Curl. Edward enjoyed the friendship of the youngest son of the rector of Grace Church and there was much visiting back and forth at the other Floyd-Jones estates: Holland House, Sewan, Massapequa Manor and others during the warmer months of the year.

Conde Raguet Thorn died in 1944, but Mrs. Thorn lived until 1961, aged 93. Her daughter, called by her middle name, DeLancey, married but had no children. She lived with Mrs. Thorn in her last years. It was quite a comfortable life in a house full of antiques acquired on trips to Europe. One of the beds had belonged to Marie Antoinette. There was a car and chauffeur for trips to the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Mrs. Thorn was a member of the Order of Colonial Dames. She was tall and stately and always impeccably dressed. She kept the grounds in excellent condition. She had numerous pet dogs, one of which had the unusual name of Enigma. Horses were a big interest in the Thorn family. They had a race track one quarter of a mile long and stables for many steeds. The tack room was filled with all manner of bridles and saddles as late as 1958, along with a carriage in excellent condition.

There was a well and a water tower, a large gardener's cottage, a small orchard and many gorgeous bushes and shrubs. Up until World War II tenant farmers grew produce and a good deal of it was canned. Firewood for the many fireplaces in the house came from a wood lot where red oak was specially grown. Foxes lived in the wild area of the estate, hunted by local residents to make stoles for their wives.

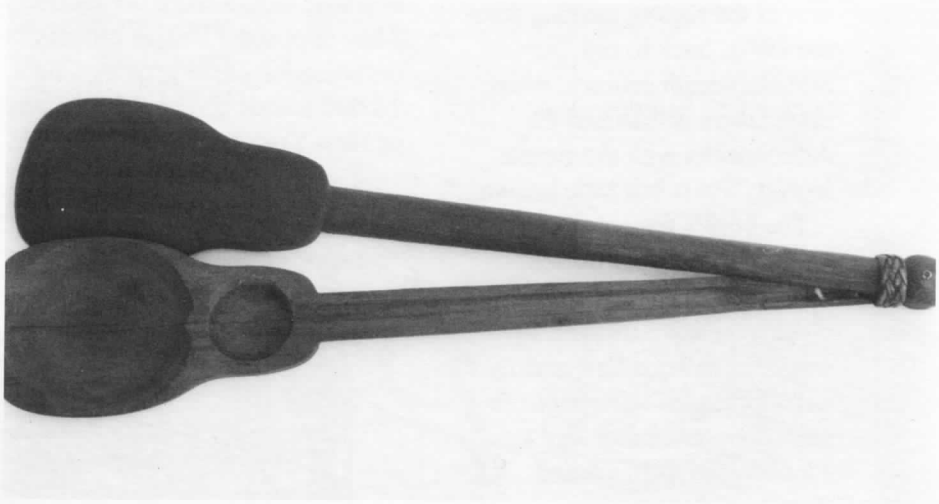
It is all gone now, the circular gravel drive and the rhododendron that was so spectacular, people were constantly snipping clippings from it. This was the last piece of the 6,000 acre estate of the privateer Jones to remain in the family's possession, 248 years after his death. It is now a recreation area owned by the Town of Oyster Bay, Marjorie Post Park.

WHATSIT?

Can any of our readers assist us in identifying the object illustrated below? One of our members brought it in to director Tom Kuehhas and asked him if he knew what it was and its purpose. Kuehhas didn't and asked his most knowledgeable relatives if they had a clue. Both Aunt Eeek and Uncle Peleg had reasonable guesses as to its use but thought that it would be a good idea to ask our members if they had some answers for us.

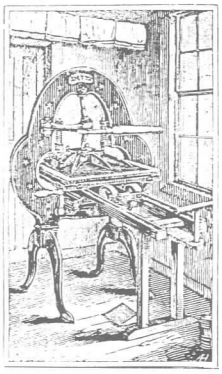
Made of two separate guitar-shaped pieces of wood, which are joined by a rivet and tightened by a sliding "turk's head" cord, the object is about 14" in length and not quite 3" wide at its broadest point. As seen in the photo, one interior face has two circular depressions cut into it, along with a channel running the entire length.

Please send us your thoughts on the matter, care of the editor of ***The Freeholder***.



Can you help us identify this object?

Blocklyn's Books



Book Reviews by Philip Blocklyn

Adirondack Prints And Printmakers: The Call Of The Wild. **Edited by Caroline Mastin Welsh. The Adirondack Museum, 1998. 212 pp. B&W Illustrations. Bibliography and index. $39.95.**

The Adirondack Museum, arguably the best regional museum in America, publishes extensively on North Country history. One of its recent titles is this collection of papers presented at the 1995 North American Print Conference. The Conference provides an overview of graphic arts of the region, ranging from the 1940s back to the mid-eighteenth century, when mapmakers dispatched the Adirondacks with the simple legend: "Parts but little known..."

The book's focus is not simply on graphic art as historical document. Much has been written on that. Instead, the emphasis falls on how greatly the engravings and lithographs in such popular venues as *Picturesque America* and *American Scenery* have actually contributed to creating our image of the Adirondack wilds in the first place. This of course was possible at a time when "the line between 'popular' and 'academic' was fluid and undefined." That is, before cable television.

But there is more here than scholarly musings on dusty old prints. There is also an entire chapter on John Henry Hill, The Hermit of Phantom Island. When not busy producing scenic etchings of Lake George, Hill would stand at his island's shore, shouting and shaking his fist at the tourist trade passing by in their fancy guideboats. Such, it must be said, is a personal ambition of this reviewer.

The Battle Of Brooklyn, 1776. **By John J. Gallagher. Sarpedon, 1995. 206 pp. Maps and illustrations. Orders of battle, bibliography, and index. $24.95.**

The Americans had no chance at the Battle of Brooklyn. They faced a general in Sir William Howe who had never lost a battle and who would retire undefeated. They opposed a British military organization capable of moving 14,000 troops across the Narrows of New York Harbor in four hours. And badly outnumbered, they fell victim to an end-around strategy that left them outflanked and unprepared for battle when battle came. In describing all this, John Gallagher reminds us how fortunate the Continental Army was not to have been destroyed that August morning, ruining Fourth of July parties for years to come.

Gallagher also provides glimpses behind the battle's main action. There is Henry Knox, the Father of American Artillery and part-time bookseller, whose stock includes kitchen furniture, hunting whips, and military fifes (a marketing strategy which has fortunately not caught on). There is Nathaniel Woodhull, who cries "God save us all" when his British captors are looking for "God save the King," and who is brained and bayoneted for this quibble over words. And then there is James Rivington, who publishes both Tory and Whig editions of his *New York Gazette,* proving again that opportunism and duplicity have never been strangers to American journalism.

The ten maps prove adequate to the job undertaken, and the orders of battle provide an added benefit.

The American retreat at the Battle of Long Island.

AUNT EEEK

Olde Things: Advice on the Care & Feeding of Antiques

Dear Aunt Eeek,

I am a retired schoolteacher who has been collecting for years. Collecting everything from Axes to Zax's has left me with an overstuffed house and much confusion as to how to organize my treasures for the passing of the torch to whomever.

My children have never shown anything but contempt for my collecting, and I am quite certain that a nursing home will soon be my last stop. How can I protect my beloved antiques from plunder by this uncaring and reckless band of pirates, who have plainly stated that they "will cart the whole load of #%*@ to the curb just as soon as they have disposed of me?"

I know that the collection is not dollar valuable but I have chosen these things for their historical significance within a context. When I look at my things I feel near to those who might have owned them in the past. Every piece has a story with it that has significance.

I would rather just give the stuff to a stranger than see it lost. Being an old coot yourself, what would you do ?

Thank You,
Olde Coot

Dear Olde Coot,

I can indeed sympathize with your position. I couldn't pass over your letter because I am sure that there are others out there who feel as we do that things can sometimes be the only connection with the everyday lives of those who went before us and who we now seem to identify with more the older we get. Unhappily we live in a world of dollar values. Thankfully you have gained insight into the truer value of the human experience.

There are many not for profit institutions and groups which would love to speak with you. Your collecting experience is a vital part of educating with the things that you have collected, and a recorded "living history" of your experience and anecdotes represents the real value of your collection. Aunt Eeek will be contacting you soon to discuss specifics. The ins and outs of donating are long and curvy enough that we are planning a separate workshop (to be announced) covering this topic.

In the meanwhile we suggest that you begin basic registration procedures of all of your goodies. Start with a running numeration and basic description of the objects. When you have a good start we will be here to assist you personally with the fine points. You are in the company of another old collector who will help.

Answers to Test Your Knowledge, p.16

1. When baked apples were dropped in the hot punch they burst and their steaming pulp resembled lamb's wool as it spread across the surface.
2. They have been called all of these.
3. Joel R. Poinsett, the plant was the poinsettia.
4. They didn't.
5. 1819. The artist was John Lewis Krimmel.
6. Chiefly an English custom, the Christmas box contained a money gift presented to servants, apprentices, service people like the postman, etc. on or around St. Stephen's Day.

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Answers to Test Your Knowledge,
continued from p. 23

7. Hot Cockles is a game and a rather silly one.
8. In 1882 in the home of Edward Johnson. An officer of the Edison Electric Company.
9. Our own Teddy Roosevelt who in 1902 forbade sons Archie and Quentin to have a tree but was quickly persuaded by Gifford Pinchot that harvesting Christmas trees was an ecological benefit to the rest of the forest. The boys got their tree but the President took a Santa-sized sackful of criticism on the country's editorial pages.
10. A deed to land belonging to Glastonbury Abbey where Jack worked. He was instructed to deliver several deeds wrapped as a Christmas pie to the king to encourage his goodwill. He helped himself to a deed to a manor.
11. 1843.
12. Neither in fact nor in Christmas literature. The Lapps and others in their part of the world had been using reindeer for uncounted years. In Christmas literature an annual periodical, The Children's Friend, ran a poem illustrated with pictures of Santa driving reindeer a year before Moore's Visit from St. Nicholas.
13. It's "Merry Christmas" in Polish.
14. St. Nicholas.
15. Groups of musicians who troop from house to house at Christmas singing carols.

JANUARY
Exhibit

Visit the State Bank of Long Island branch on South Street to seepaintings, engravings and photographs that illustrate shipbuilding in Oyster Bay, as well as other seaport towns like it. Don't miss this timely exhibit!

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